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IDAHO TO PRESENT AT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY SUMMIT

BOISE – The Idaho State Department of Education has been invited to present at the International School Safety Convention because of its innovative approach to improving school safety.

When Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna took office in 2007, he committed to conducting a statewide assessment of the safety and security of all K-12 school facilities across Idaho. Based on these results, the state has identified weaknesses and worked to improve the safety and security in all school facilities.

“For our children to truly be free to learn, they must be free from fear, intimidation and violence,” Superintendent Luna said. “We don’t ever want to look back and wonder if we could have done more.”

Because of this innovative work, the International School Safety Convention asked staff from the Idaho State Department of Education to present at its annual conference. The goal of the convention is to share the latest resources that communities can use to improve school safety and security across the country and around the globe.

The Idaho State Department of Education conducted the Safe and Secure Schools Assessment in Fall 2007, with support from the Idaho Legislature and Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter. Based on this assessment, the state recognized Idaho schools primarily needed technical assistance in creating and implementing effective crisis response plans. Therefore, the State Department of Education created a template crisis response plan for all schools to utilize based on the National Incident Management System (NIMS) standard and then provided training to school administrators across Idaho.

Michael Dorn, Program Chair for the International School Safety Convention, said, “I am deeply impressed with the level of NIMS integration into Idaho’s K-20 educational organization. That provides the strongest possible foundation for coordinating plans, people, systems, and equipment to handle major school crisis events.”

In addition, the state also created a list of school safety and security changes schools could implement at little or no cost to the district.

Idaho’s Safe and Drug-Free Schools Coordinator Matt McCarter will travel to Denver to present at the International School Safety Convention on April 22-23 to share Idaho’s success story with other states.

Visit http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/safe_secure/ to learn more about Idaho’s steps to improve school safety and security.

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